

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 00782 181505Z

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 FRB-03

INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 SP-02

CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 AGRE-00 PA-01 PRS-01

/057 W

-----181713Z 080274 /65

R 181304Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3188

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PASS USDA/ERS/SCHOONOVER AND FAS/NOVOTNY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, UR

SUBJECT: USSR: CONDITION OF WINTER GRAINS

1. FOLLOWING RECAP OF AG ATTACHE OFFICIE ASSESSMENT OF USSR WINTER GRAINS SITUATION PROBABLY CONTAINS LITTLE NEW INFORMATION FOR WASHINGTON ANALYSTS, BUT WE CONSIDER THAT OUR VIEWS SHOULD BE KNOWN. FURTHER WE WOULD LIKE YOUR COMMENTS ON CONDITION OF WINTER GRAINS, IF THEY DIFFER FROM OURS.

2. SUMMARY: WE VIEW MID-JANUARY CONDITION OF SOVIET WINTER GRAINS AS GOOD TO VERY GOOD. SOWING TOOK PLACE EARLIER AND UNDER MORE FAVORABLE CONDITIONS THAN IN 1975, ALTHOUGH AN OCTOBER COLD SNAP PROBABLY HELD SEEDINGS BELOW THE 41-MILLION-HECTARE TARGET. FALL MOISTURE WAS ABOVE NORMAL IN AREAS WHICH ACCOUNT FOR THREE-QUARTERS OF WINTER WHEAT PRODUCTION. BELOW-NORMAL TEMPERATURES FOLLOWED AN UNUSUALLY WARM NOVEMBER, BUT GENERALLY GOOD SNOW COVER APPEARS SO FAR TO HAVE HELD WINTER-KILL TO A MINIMUM.

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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 00782 181505Z

2. FALL SEEDING PROCEEDED AT A FASTER PACE AND UNDER MORE FAVORABLE CONDITIONS IN 1976 THAN A YEAR EARLIER. AT THE END OF SEPTEMBER, MORE THAN 33.5 MILLION HECTARES HAD BEEN SOWN, COMPARED WITH LESS THAN 30 MILLION IN 1975. BY OCTOBER 11 37.4 MILLION HECTARES WERE REPORTED SOWN -- 91 PERCENT OF THE ENHANCED PLAN. HOWEVER, A FEW DAYS LATER, UNSEASONABLY COLD WEATHER AND LIGHT

SNOWFALL STRUCK THE UKRAINE. NO FURTHER SOWING REPORTS HAVE APPEARED IN THE CENTRAL PRESS, BUT IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THE PLAN WAS FULFILLED. EVEN SO, 1976 FALL SOWINGS INDICATE AN INCREASE OF AT LEAST EIGHT PERCENT OVER 1975.

3. EXCEPT FOR THE MID-OCTOBER FREEZE, WEATHER CONDITIONS DURING SOWING AND PLANTING EMERGENCE WERE MORE FAVORABLE THAN IN 1975. FALL PRECIPITATION WAS ABOVE-NORMAL IN OBLASTS WHICH NORMALLY ACCOUNT FOR NEARLY THREE-FOURTHS OF WINTER WHEAT PRODUCTION (ONLY ONE-FIFTH OF THIS AREA HAD ABOVE NORMAL MOISTURE A YEAR AGO. AGATTACHE OFFICE TRAVEL SCHEDULE THROUGH WESTERN RSFSR UKRAIN AND MOLDAVIA CONFIRMED GENERALLY VERY GOOD TO EXCELLENT EMERGENCE AND EARLY GROWTH, EXCEPT STRETCH OF ABOUT 100 KM NORTH OF PYATIGORSK. UNUSUALLY WARM NOVEMBER WEATHER PREMITTED THE RESUMPTION OF PLANT GROWTH IN MOST AREAS FROM LATE OCTOBER THROUGH EARLY DECEMBER.

4. FROM DECEMBER 10, TEMPERATURES DROPPED TO MORE SEASONAL LEVELS, ACCOMPANIED IN MOST AREAS BY SNOWFALL. THE YEAR'S END AND EARLY JANUARY SAW BELOW-NORMAL READINGS, BUT A SNOW COVER (5-20 CMS) REPORTEDLY PROTECTED WINTER GRAINS IN NEARLY ALL AREAS. (AN EXCEPTION MAY HAVE BEEN THE SE CENTRAL ZHERNOZEM ZONE WHERE, IN A FEW AREAS, SNOW COVER WAS LESS THAN FIVE CMS., AND TEMPERATURE AT THE TILLERING NODE FELL TO MINUS 17 DEGREES C.)

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PAGE 03 MOSCOW 00782 181505Z

5. WHILE WINTER GRAINS NOW APPEAR IN GOOD CONDITION, REAL TESTS LIE AHEAD IN THE THAW-FREEZE-THAW PATTERNS OF EARLY SPRING WHEN PLANT COLD-RESISTANCE IS AT ITS LOWEST. MOREOVER, THERE IS THE POSSIBILITY THAT IN THOSE AREAS WHERE FALL WEATHER WAS PARTICULARLY MOIST (W. UKRAINE, N.E. CAUCASUS) PLANTS MAY NOT HAVE "HARDENED" ADEQUATELY TO PROTECT THEMSELVES AT TEMPERATURES A FEW DEGREES ABOVE THE NORMALLY CRITICAL MINUS 16-18 DEGREE C. LEVEL (AT THE TILLERING NODE). IN AREAS WHERE FALL TILLERING HAS BEEN EXTRAORDINARILY PROFUSE, GOOD SPRING MOISTURE WILL BE REQUIRED TO KEEP AN ASSET FROM BECOMING A LIABILITY (AS OCCURRED IN 1974-75 PERIOD.)

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT, ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, GRAINS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 18-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977MOSCOW00782
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770018-0827
Format: TEL
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770142/aaaabkhk.tel
Line Count: 111
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 727847d5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3572866
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: USSR: CONDITION OF WINTER GRAINS
TAGS: EAGR, UR, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/727847d5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009